

What does the European Protestant Reformation have to do with Global Pentecostalism?

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One of the most famous Christian women in the world in the early twentieth century was Indian scholar and philanthropist Pandita Ramabai, a remarkable Christian leader, social reformer and Bible translator, who penned these words in 1905:

Let the revival come to Indians so as to suit their nature and feelings, [as] God has made them. He knows their nature, and He will work out His purpose in them in a way which may not conform with the ways of Western people and their lifelong training. Let the English and other Western Missionaries begin to study the Indian nature, I mean the religious inclinations, the emotional side of the Indian mind. Let them not try to conduct revival meetings and devotional exercises altogether in Western ways and conform with Western etiquette. If our Western teachers and foreignised Indian leaders want the work of God to be carried on among us in their own way, they are sure to stop or spoil it.¹

This quotation has implications for discourse on the legacy of what was a very western European dispute, the Reformation. She reminds us not to rely on western forms of Christianity to try and satisfy 'nature and feelings' that are found in very different cultures worldwide. Those churches in the western world that were a direct outcome of the Reformation are mostly denominations in serious decline. It is an open question whether they have much relevance in the contemporary world, especially in their countries of origin. The future of Christianity seems to lie elsewhere, perhaps in Charismatic Catholicism and Evangelicalism, especially of the Pentecostal and Charismatic varieties. It can be argued that the transformation in world Christianity during the past century has been more profound than the Reformation ever was.² On the other hand, we live in a very different world today, where Christianity no longer dominates the political, economic and social landscape as it did in 16th century Europe. As William Kay points out, for this reason Pentecostalism 'is closer to

¹ *Bombay Guardian and Banner of Asia* (7 Nov 1905), p.9.

² Allan H. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (Oxford, 2013).

a renewal movement than a movement of broad reformation'.³ However, the majority of Christians now live outside the western world, and a significant proportion are Pentecostals and Charismatics. This alone makes the European Reformation rather a distant influence.

In this paper, I will address the phenomenon of global Pentecostalism. Although it is historically and theologically linked to the European Reformation through its origins in radical forms of Evangelicalism, the transformations that have occurred in recent years have taken it far beyond the Reformation principles. It will be seen nevertheless that these principles continue to characterise all evangelical forms of Christianity. Secondly, I focus on evangelical missions, their role in the emergence of Pentecostalism throughout the world, and in what ways they are a part of the legacy of the Protestant Reformation. Finally, I consider what relevance if any, this legacy has for global Pentecostalism today.

The Historical and Theological Context

October 2017 was the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, heralded as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. There was much in this event that meant a new era for all forms of Christianity. Luther's principles railing against organised and ritualistic religion, and his insistence on 'faith alone, grace alone, Scripture alone' continue to be founding principles of both contemporary Evangelicalism and its offspring Pentecostalism. One could even say as many scholars have, that Evangelicalism is the contemporary result of the Reformation. Luther's Protestantism was a 'protest' against the prevailing practices of the Catholic Church in German states, and he affirmed the priesthood of all believers, salvation by grace through faith (without the need for clergy or sacraments), and a reliance on the Bible (*sola scriptura*) as the basis of final religious authority.⁴ The Reformation remains a 'defining point of reference' in evangelical consciousness for these reasons, but there were also differences. As McGrath points out, evangelism (in the sense of converting 'unbelievers') was not a priority for either Luther or Calvin, except when it meant the conversion of Catholics to Protestantism.⁵ It would be almost two centuries before any Protestant missionaries were sent out. Evangelism has been a priority of Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism that has set them apart from most of the historic Reformation churches.

³ William K. Kay, 'Luther and Pentecostalism', *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* (2017), 3.

⁴ Randall Balmer, *Blessed Assurance: A History of Evangelicalism in America* (Beacon, 1999), 13.

⁵ Allister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), 15.

The Reformation also created a new plurality within Christianity. The individualistic ideas of the Reformation quickly created a splintering within Protestantism in Luther's lifetime that he was later to regret, but which has now come to characterize Pentecostalism ever since its beginnings in the early 20th Century. As one of my friends once put it, Pentecostalism has succeeded in creating more schisms in a century than it took the rest of Christianity in two thousand years. Each split considers itself to have discovered the *true* meaning of the Bible. The sad fact is that the Reformation set off a chain of schisms within western Christianity that continue to the present day in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

It is an almost impossible task to define what we mean by 'Pentecostalism' with any precision, for it is an incredibly diverse movement that has gone through a constant process of division, recombination and re-formation. I consider most Pentecostal denominations today to be a subset of Evangelicalism, although with certain distinctions. Defining these movements is particularly an acute task when even 'evangelical' has become a dirty word in the media, particularly through the so-called 'Religious Right'. White American 'Evangelicals', including most Pentecostals, have been notorious in their support of Donald Trump, even though the vast majority of Black-led evangelical and Pentecostal churches, and Hispanic ones, did not. So we need to be clear that 'evangelical' is a theological position rather than a socio-political one.

Historically, the Radical, or Anabaptist Reformation is often seen as the only really 'evangelical' reformation, more so than either the Lutheran and Reformed Reformations were, for these were still wedded to the idea of a church-state union. The Anabaptist movement represents a type of proto-Evangelicalism. The term 'Anabaptist' means 'rebaptiser' and at first signified a heretic, and therefore someone subject to condemnation and execution. The Augsburg confession of 1530 condemned the Anabaptists in three articles: because (1) they denied the validity of the office of the bishop; (2) they denied the authority of the established church (whether Catholic or Protestant); and (3) they repudiated infant baptism because they believed that an infant was not ready to receive baptism on New Testament terms. They called for baptism only on confession of faith and commitment to discipleship by the candidate. For them, infant baptism was not biblical baptism, and so they denied that they were 'rebaptizers'. But their real objection to the name 'Anabaptist' was that they refused to be classed as heretics and to be reckoned as not being the true church. On the contrary, they had a deep conviction that they *were* the true church and that the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches were the false churches.

We should also not romanticise the Lutheran Reformation. Luther himself tolerated no dissent in the German lands he influenced, and led a fierce persecution of Anabaptists, condemning them to death. He supported a violent suppression of the peasants' uprising to demand their human rights in 1525. Luther was a virulent anti-Semite who advocated the burning of Jewish houses and synagogues and the plundering of their goods, which undoubtedly paved the way for Hitler's Holocaust.⁶ Most Anabaptist groups emigrated to South Russia, the Netherlands and North America to escape the severe persecution. The seventeenth century English Baptists, who had met Anabaptist Mennonites in the Netherlands during their exile there, took part of the 'Anabaptist' name and passed it down to their millions of spiritual descendants, one of the largest evangelical denominations today. Not all Anabaptists and Baptists are evangelical, but the majority are. The importance of this movement to Pentecostalism is their emphases on the priesthood of all believers, the separation of the true church from the state, a personal experience of Christ through new birth before a person could be called a Christian, and a high standard of morality in communities separated from the world.⁷ These remain defining characteristics of most Pentecostal churches today.

In the English-speaking world, the word 'evangelical' now has a narrower meaning to include those groups of different denominations that were associated with the 'evangelical revivals' that started in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their roots are found in John Wesley's Methodism and the Reformed revivalism of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, and continued through such well-known figures as Charles Finney and Dwight Moody. These revivals could also be characterised as 'proto-Pentecostal' as they were characterised by long, emotional services and ecstatic manifestations of the moving of the Spirit. They resulted in a surge in evangelical missionaries heading all over the world. Historically, these included the early Methodists in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and those revivalists associated with the Great Evangelical Awakening of the eighteenth century and Second Evangelical Awakening of the mid-nineteenth century. Mark Noll writes that the foundation of the earliest evangelical movements that began with Methodist revivalists like Whitefield and the Wesleys was an 'unswerving belief in the need for conversion (the new birth) and the necessity of a life of active holiness (the power of godliness)'. Significantly for this subject, the evangelical revivals resulted in a rapid increase in numbers of 'evangelical'

⁶ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-39/was-luther-anti-semitic.html>; Kay 'Luther and Pentecostalism', 9.

⁷ Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, Vol. II (Harper & Row, 1975), 778-786.

missionaries coming to India, China, Africa and other parts of the world in the nineteenth century and beyond.

Today there are many thousands of different groups and denominations worldwide who call themselves 'evangelical'. They share many things in common with Pentecostals, but especially these two: a high view of the Bible as having supreme authority in matters of life and doctrine, and the need for evangelism or sharing the faith with those who are not Christians—according to evangelical definitions of what a 'Christian' is. The aim is that the 'unconverted' might be converted, 'born again' or 'saved' through the atoning work of Christ. There have been various attempts to define Evangelicalism by reference to its theological emphases. Most of these attempts say the same things in different ways.⁸ Although general theological principles may be said to characterise Evangelicalism as a whole (and indeed, they also characterise the early Protestant Reformation), they do not all have the same emphasis in different movements or at different times in history. Evangelicalism has remained stubbornly diverse.⁹

Revivalism and Missions

The statement that the Protestant Reformation and the Evangelical Revivals had consequences for Evangelicalism and by proxy, Pentecostalism today needs qualification, especially when referring to the majority world. As MacCulloch points out, 'It is always unpredictable as to which beliefs from the Reformation past will suddenly re-emerge'.¹⁰ For a start, the Reformation could be said to have had only an *indirect* effect on global Pentecostalism. In 17th century Western Europe a spiritual renewal movement within Protestant churches known as Pietism began, where the importance of individual holiness or 'piety' through Bible study and prayer was the focus. The Pietists saw themselves as the true heirs of the Reformation principles. In the next century a similar renewal movement began in Britain, Ireland and the American colonies marked by revivalist meetings and evangelistic fervour, especially the revivals associated with the early Methodists and the Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards in North America, known in Britain as the 'Evangelical Revival' and in America as the 'Great Awakening'. These were the ancestors of the

⁸ Randall Balmer, *The Making of Evangelicalism: From Revivalism to Politics and Beyond* (Baylor, 2010), 2; McGrath, *Evangelicalism*, 51, 54-80.

⁹ Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (IVP, 2003), 20.

¹⁰ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* (Penguin, 2004), 700.

Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism that was to spread throughout the world in the 20th century.

Evangelicalism as we know it today has a long past, but the term only came into its present meaning in the mid- century. Most of the evangelical revival movements in the last three centuries were accompanied by various ecstatic manifestations and spiritual gifts. There was always a measure of 'Pentecostalism' in evangelical history. Most historians agree that the most enduring influence on Evangelicalism, and consequently on Pentecostalism, came through eighteenth century Methodism, which in turn was heavily influenced by the Moravian movement led by Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, himself a graduate of the Pietist-inspired Martin Luther Halle University in Germany. He was also a disciple of its famed professor August Hermann Francke, the leading Pietist of the time. At first Pietism was a movement within the Lutheran churches in German states seeking a return to the Reformation ideals of personal piety and evangelical devotion. The Danish-Halle Mission was the first Protestant mission, initiated by the Pietist Danish King Frederick IV to send missionaries to the Danish colony (1620-1845) of Tranquebar, in south east India—part of present-day Tamil Nadu. The first Protestant missionaries were German Pietists: Bartholomeus Ziegenbalg and Henry Plütschau went there in 1706 from Halle.

The legacy of the Protestant Reformation is seen in its effect on Christian missions. The 'Great Century' of missions was the period after the French Revolution until the beginning of the First World War, when Europe imposed its will and ideas on the whole world. Christianity was seen as inseparably connected with European civilization. By 1800, Asia and Africa had hardly been touched by Christianity in proportion to the overall populations, and Indian Christianity was restricted to the south-west of the subcontinent, almost entirely Syrian Orthodox or Roman Catholic. The nineteenth century was relatively peaceful in Europe and the Industrial Revolution gave Europe the advantage in speed and power. There was a new passion for exploration and expansion into unknown lands. Captain James Cook led the way to Australia and the Pacific in the eighteenth century, and the missionary David Livingstone brought home stories of the exotic interior of Africa a century later. European countries, but especially Britain and France, began their conquest of Asian and African lands. A religious awakening in Europe accompanied the colonization that occurred throughout the world.

William Carey (1761-1834) was a direct result of these stirrings, and his contribution to Indian Protestant Christianity was enormous. Carey has been called the 'father' of modern Protestant missions, and in 1792 published his missionary manifesto, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. This short book

outlined Carey's basic principles for missions. Firstly, Christians were 'obliged' to 'convert the Heathens'. Secondly, wise use must be made of available resources for missions, and thirdly, accurate information must be obtained before embarking on any missionary enterprise.

Carey's history is well known. His efforts resulted in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792. Other missionary societies followed the BMS. With the passing of time, we have forgotten that almost all these societies were fundamentally evangelical. Among many others, the London Missionary Society was formed in 1795; its first members were evangelical Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Independents (Congregationalists). The earliest LMS mission started in the Pacific Islands in 1797. Famous missionaries included John Williams, who went to the Pacific and was martyred; Robert Morrison, who went to China; and John Philip, Robert Moffatt and his son-in-law David Livingstone (1813-1873), who were in Southern and Central Africa. The LMS became Congregational (Independent, Reformed) when other denominations started their own societies.

Despite the rather bad press given the foreign missionaries' links with colonisation, there can be little doubt that they contributed much to Christianity throughout the world. As a direct result of the Protestant Reformation's emphasis on *Sola Scriptura*, one of the biggest contributions made by Protestant missionaries was to translate the Bible into the vernacular. They saw this as their first and perhaps most important task. Ziegenbalg translated the New Testament into Tamil by 1714, and as we have seen, Carey and team translated parts of the Bible into 44 Indian languages. Elsewhere, Robert Morrison translated the Bible into Chinese by 1814, Henry Martyn into Persian and Arabic in 1819, and Adoniram Judson published the Bible in Burmese in 1834. During the nineteenth century the number of Bible translations rose from 70 in 1800 to 520 by 1900, consisting of 100 whole Bibles and 120 New Testaments. In addition, missionaries established many schools for training leaders for the church and teaching people to read the Bible. These schools were often the foundation for democratic nationalistic movements, and especially pioneered the education of women. They promoted improvements through hospitals and agriculture, trained doctors and nurses, and established universities and colleges that exist to this day.

Single women missionaries began to be sent to Asia in the mid-1800s, and by 1900 women missionaries greatly outnumbered men. The training of the future indigenous leaders of the church was another legacy of Protestant missions. At first, missionaries also made use of what was called 'Native agency'. By 1900 in many missions ordained nationals exceeded foreigners, but were often subordinate. This was stark in the case of the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans. By 1900 neither church had a bishop of non-European origin, and

Protestant missions were no better. Although Protestant mission leaders Henry Venn, Secretary of the CMS, and Rufus Anderson of the American Board called for self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches in 1854, this policy was not fully implemented for another century.

It is clear that missions and colonialism were in a complex relationship. Missionaries almost always preceded colonisers, because wherever British missions were, British rule often followed. There was often conflict between the colonial powers and their respective missionaries, who were often banned and expelled. Missions had to negotiate with colonisers, who could restrict them. Colonial governments kept Christian missionaries out of Muslim areas, thereby indirectly promoting the advance of Islam. The British East India Company (EIC) financed Hindu and Muslim religious festivals, but banned Indian Christians from military or government jobs and refused Christian missionaries permission to work in British India. However, in 1813 the EIC was forced by Parliament to allow them, through pressure by evangelical elites in the Clapham sect, famous for their efforts to abolish slavery. The Clapham sect was a group of Anglican elites in London which included not only William Wilberforce and John Venn, but also Lord Teignmouth, former Governor-General of India, and Charles Grant (1746-1823), who worked for the EIC and became its director in 1805 and a member of parliament. After Grant's conversion to evangelical Christianity, he found sympathisers in the Clapham Sect. Their belief in the need for the evangelisation of India was their second most important cause after the abolition of slavery. In 1813, when the EIC's charter came due for renewal, the Clapham Sect mobilised public opinion in Britain and secured half a million signatures on petitions. They eventually succeeded in overturning the vested interests of the company and gained a 'Missionary Clause' in the new charter. Thus the precedent was set for missionaries to go not only to India and China but to any place where Britain had a presence, much of the world in those days. The new British evangelical missionaries after this were not as sensitive as the earlier ones had been. As Mallampalli described the situation in India, they 'employed a style of preaching that fomented tensions' and 'attacked Indian cultural and religious traditions'.¹¹

So, sometimes missionaries acted like colonial agents, especially when financed by the state, as in the case of Spain and Portugal. But white colonialists also often silenced and punished troublesome missionaries, and distrusted missionaries on the whole as promoters of dangerous egalitarian doctrines. British missionaries sometimes used their influence to

¹¹ Chandra Mallampalli, 'South Asia', in Lamin Sanneh & Michael J. McClymond (eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Christianity* (Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 535-545 (539).

attempt to change colonial policies, but they did not always want an end to colonialism. Some missionaries opposed slavery and forced labour in Kenya and South Africa, the opium trade in China; they supported indigenous land rights in Africa, and called for the punishment of abuse by settlers and colonial officials in Africa and India. Most missionaries were *not* activists, but saw that their primary role was to convert people for Christianity. But they also tried to reform societies in such areas as polygamy, child marriage, widow burning, female infanticide, female circumcision, foot binding, and indigenous slavery. Of course, these reform attempts also had hostile reactions from local people.

The Reformation Legacy for Global Pentecostalism

By the beginning of the twentieth century there was a sharp increase in evangelical missionary activities. Societies of the 'faith mission' type were increasing and non-denominational independent missionaries abounded. Places like India and China were regarded as lands of unparalleled opportunities. As far as they were concerned, these were countries whose people were receptive to the gospel as never before. One missionary report quoted in the British Pentecostal Missionary Union magazine in 1913 put it:

The removal of long standing obstacles, the eagerness of the people to hear, the growing friendliness of all classes, the deepening sense of the inadequacy of the old religions to meet their spiritual needs, and the, as yet dim, but sure, convictions that in Christ their soul hunger can find satisfaction—all these constitute an opportunity the like of which has never been witnessed before. The splendid spiritual harvests of past years are harbingers of still greater to come.¹²

We must remember that evangelical missionaries were products of revival movements. Many of them retained their revivalist instincts and as a result, when news of the new Pentecostal revival reached them, some of them joined the new movement. Pentecostalism itself was still in its formative stage in the first two decades of the 20th century, but it was born in revivals, not only in North America, but in other places as far-flung as India, Korea, China, Chile, Nigeria and Madagascar. It was the work of the so-called 'native workers' that spread Pentecostalism globally in the early years, and most of the most recent growth has had nothing to do with foreign missionaries. Some years ago while researching early Pentecostal missions,¹³ I was unable to find much detail of the lives of the indigenous pioneers who

¹² Quoted by Cecil Polhill in *Flames of Fire* 16 (Mar 1913), p.4.

¹³ Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (SCM, 2007).

spread Pentecostalism in villages and cities all over the world, because of the emphasis in the newsletter sources on 'their' foreign missionaries. But here and there we get a glimpse—even in these rather chaotic beginnings—from scattered reports. Foreign missionaries depended almost entirely on indigenous evangelists and the so-called 'Bible women' for communicating effectively and for the growth of their work. These workers are sometimes referred to in their reports. Will Norton, born in India and son of a former Methodist missionary, believed that Pentecostals had no time to lose. They had the solution for the salvation of the lost millions of India, whose 'awful need of help' could be met through the power of the Spirit. Preparing themselves in prayer for 'Pentecostal power' was 'right now needed for world witnessing'. He said that there were 'millions of people now in India' who had 'never once heard the Name of Jesus, a heaven to go to or a hell to be warned of'. Thousands of these people were 'dying daily without Christ'.¹⁴ The problem was not receptivity, but the great shortage of missionary volunteers, according to these circles. Pentecostals were urged to join an 'aggressive campaign' to reach the 'depressed classes'. The Indian caste system was one of the greatest challenges for western missionaries. Pentecostals joined in its general condemnation by Christian missionaries, pointing to the benefits of the message that proclaims unity and equality of all in Christ.¹⁵ The 'Pariah' (Dalit) caste was considered the most open to Christian advances and missionaries were urged to penetrate into their villages.¹⁶

There were also specific social benefits brought about by missionary activities, including providing education for the masses, including women, producing vernacular textbooks and teacher training, founding universities, and teaching languages, medicine, public health, and agriculture. Protestant missions in particular encouraged mass printing, producing vernacular Bibles, and newspapers. Missionaries were important transmitters of western medical ideas, providing doctors and nurses, promoting female literacy, public health training, and medical schools—this also impacted life expectancy and infant mortality, among other things. Missionaries also transmitted ideas about western democracy. Christian missions brought about a religious transformation worldwide. Not only was Christianity fast becoming a world faith, but all major world faiths themselves, including Hinduism, were affected by the encounter with Christian missions. As a result they became more text-based, they created their own social reform movements and vernacular education systems, and their doctrines were sometimes reformulated in reaction to missionary critique.

¹⁴ *Triumphs of Faith* 36:9 (Sept 1916), 202.

¹⁵ *Latter Rain Evangel* 5:7 (Apr 1913), 17.

¹⁶ *Flames of Fire* 9 (Jan 1913), 3.

The spread of Pentecostalism throughout the majority world came about primarily through local agency rather than through foreign missionaries, even when the latter sometimes initiated and facilitated the process. Multiple Pentecostal missions resulted in multiple new churches, and encouraged independent churches, especially when schism resulted from the patronising attitudes of foreign missionaries. One of the questions hotly debated by scholars is: if Christianity makes exclusive and absolute demands on other people's religious allegiance, is this a form of religious or cultural imperialism? So-called 'postcolonial' Christianity has had a great impact on the changing religious demographics. Some of the salient points are that Christianity has become increasingly non-western, despite the increasing 20th century US American involvement in mission. In the late twentieth century we have also witnessed the phenomenon of 'reverse mission' to Europe and North America from those who have brought their particular brand of usually Pentecostal Christianity from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Increasing numbers of leaders and members of European-based denominations are non-European in origin and theologically conservative.

We cannot discuss the legacy of the Reformation without also looking at the schisms that continued into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. To take one example from India, according to one estimate more than half of India's Christians (the author writes of 62 million) were 'Independents' in 2002.¹⁷ Many of these churches founded in the 20th century are Pentecostal or Charismatic churches, and several significant churches had their origins in the state of Kerala, where India's Thomas Christians are found. The history of Indian Independency is a complicated one, with so many complex relationships and historical connections between its main protagonists. There were important influences encouraging Indian independency in the early twentieth century, including that of Pandita Ramabai and the Christian mystic Sadhu Sundar Singh. Both these leaders promoted a truly Indian Christianity, in distinction to western Christianity. Sundar Singh was the inspiration for a focus on the experiential and the ecstatic through his adopting elements of the Hindu *bhakti* (devotion) tradition, and Ramabai's Mukti Church is still active today.¹⁸

Independent Pentecostal and Charismatic churches have developed rapidly in India and throughout the world. The emergence of the phenomenon of these independent churches raises several issues. Firstly, there is the question of relevancy in a culture that is used to 'powerful' phenomena in religious life. One of the main reasons for the popularity of

¹⁷ Steven Barrie-Anthony, 'Religion in Contemporary India', in J. Gordon Melton & Martin Baumann (eds.), *Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*, 4 Vols. (ABC-Clio, 2003), 627-635 (627).

¹⁸ Roger E. Hedlund, *Quest for Identity: India's Churches of Indigenous Origin* (ISPCK, 2000), 157-167.

Pentecostal and Charismatic forms of Christianity is that they appear to provide a more 'powerful' religion than either the Catholic, mainline Protestant, or other older churches had done, and they address issues relevant to the popular worldview and religious consciousness. Western theologies tend to ignore or minimise the awareness of the spirit world with its destructive, evil and powerful forces that underlie the religious consciousness of many peoples worldwide. Particularly in their practices of healing and deliverance from evil spirits, independent Pentecostal churches demonstrate that Christianity has this power, and they appeal to people oppressed by sickness, misfortune and affliction. Independent churches represent valuable case studies of a theology that may begin to examine hitherto unexplored questions. Most of these independent churches are evangelical in theology and have much in common with western-founded denominations, but have also taken a stand against all that is seen as foreign forms of Christianity. Roger Hedlund has outlined some of the doctrinal distinctives of Indian independent churches, but warns us against generalising about such diverse movements. Many of these distinctives are particularly appropriate in India's Hindu context, including 'mysteries' explained from the Bible, meditation as a method of understanding the Bible, and an emphasis on the experiential dimension of 'knowing God' through intense and prolonged prayer. Sometimes the leaders occupy a similar function to the Hindu gurus (and are sometimes called 'Christian gurus'), highly respected by their disciples as an authoritative guide and example who provides daily guidance for living. Hedlund says that there are also a number of 'deviant' ideas among a few Indian churches, such as tritheism and an emphasis on extrabiblical prophecies and 'new revelations'.¹⁹ But the independent churches demonstrate what Maggay in the Philippines context has described as the reason for their growth: 'it connects receptivity to a religion oriented towards power'. She says that 'to incarnate Christianity more genuinely within the context of Filipino culture is to become, not only perhaps more Christian, but also more Filipino'.²⁰ This is what independent Pentecostal churches worldwide are also concerned with, or as Ramabai put it, 'to suit [Indian] nature and feelings'.

There can be no doubt that in many parts of the majority world, Pentecostalism has made an enormous impact. In countries like the United States, Guatemala, Brazil, Nigeria, the Philippines and South Korea, if we include the Pentecostals and independent churches, evangelicals form the majority of Protestants in India and have shown remarkable growth during the last century. The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements might be the future of

¹⁹ Hedlund, *Quest*, 233-253.

²⁰ Melba P. Maggay, 'Towards Sensitive Engagement with Filipino Indigenous Consciousness', *International Review of Mission* 87 (1998), 361-373 (366, 372).

evangelical Christianity because they attract young people in particular, in contrast to the older churches originating in western Europe with an increasingly aging membership in the lands of their origin. Most Pentecostals and Charismatics are 'evangelical' in beliefs. This paper has attempted to show that the Protestant Reformation has set off a spiral of events and ideas that have had a profound, if indirect, influence on global Pentecostalism. This in turn is the result of the rapid increase in missionary activity that followed in the wake of the attempts to revitalise Protestant Christianity through the revivals in the western world. But most contemporary Christians will find their own legacy in the work of those indigenous pioneers who have blazed the way towards a type of Christianity that fits their own context, one that is very, very different from that of 16th century Europe. More could be said about the need for contextualisation, but it is hoped that this paper will provoke some thought into the legacy of these pioneers.